The Pulpit

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A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Theodore O. Wedel:
Why Do I Have to Be "Me"?

Byron L. Johnson	•	Christian Citizenship
Gerald Watkins	•	Finding a Scapegoat
David K. Barnwell	•	Other People
Johnstone G. Patrick	•	Pageant and Perfume
Walter L. Cook	•	Who Sweeps a Room
Donald Douds	•	Mend Your Speech

JOHN R. BODO
THE SERMON IN THE MINISTER'S TASK

VOL. XXXI, No. 5 MAY 1960

The Pulpit

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A Prayer

IN HUMBLE confidence and trust, O God, we draw nigh to thee, aware that thou art all about us and in the depths of our lives. Teach us to see thy handiwork in all the beauty and rapture in the world around us; but may we also see thee in every word of kindness, in every deed of thoughtfulness. We would thank thee for all that ennobles and enriches life — for friends and good books, for music and art — indeed, for everything which brings encouragement and strength to our lives.

Help us to live always above the common level — to stand up for the ideals we cherish and to do those deeds we deem to be right. Give us wisdom to make the right decisions and courage to live out these decisions. We would not pray that our lives be made easy, but only that we be strong; not that we be successful, but that we may be useful.

We would ask, O God, thy continued blessing upon all the people of our congregation — the aged and the infirm, the sick and the weary, and especially upon our children and youth. Give wisdom to those directing the affairs of our city, state and nation that through this land freedom, justice and righteousness may prevail. Hear our prayer and the unexpressed longings and yearnings of our hearts; for in the spirit of Jesus we pray. Amen. — *Donald E. Riker, First Presbyterian Church, Peoria, Illinois.*

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXXI MAY 1960 No. 5

. . . Then a Plan

FIRST a purpose. In the April issue The Pulpit declared its objective. As its masthead states it is a journal of contemporary preaching, discovering and distributing to its readers current sermons which are commendable in form and substance. But, more than that, its ultimate goal is to produce rather than merely report good sermons. It is a journal *for* contemporary preaching, dedicated not to the discovery of great sermons but to the cultivation of good ones. It has no reason for being unless it lifts the standards and effectiveness of the American pulpit, no justification unless it inspires, instructs and challenges men who are continuously engaged in communicating the gospel to weary and sinful men. How can this purpose be translated into a workable plan of operation?

The purpose as stated automatically restricts and focuses the plan. The limited range of this journal's avowed function dismisses at once all temptations to ghostwrite the sermons of its readers. Proceeding as it does on the fundamental assumption that preaching begins in experience and ends in testimony, that it is "truth through personality," The Pulpit disclaims any interest in those homiletical devices which in conveying the truth by-pass the living witness of the preacher himself. Good preaching, it was stated, is transformed personality transforming personality. No paraphrase of another minister's work and certainly no stereotyped message which passes from a duplicating machine to the pew merely by way of the preacher's lips can ever work a converting power upon the deep centers of men's lives.

Again, The Pulpit is not a minister's manual; it does not provide suggested sermon outlines or indexed illustrations or projected and systematic programs for monthly or yearly schedules of preaching. There is an abundance of material — some of it good — for those ministers who need such aid and guidance. The book reviews of this periodical will recognize and appraise the best of such books and magazines as they come upon the market and special articles will treat at times the wise use and the perilous misuse of those aids to sermonizing which are available to the minister. Throughout, however, the aim is to stimulate inventiveness, originality and effectiveness in sermon composition. Any homiletical aids which forward this end will be encouraged; those which do for ministers what they should do for themselves must be labeled for what they are, debilitating crutches which weaken men even while they pretend to support them.

The plan of operation by which this preachers' journal will accomplish its purpose adopts and will continue the major departments usually listed in the table of contents: sermons, six or seven each month; articles, two or three; and features. The features will include book reviews and editorial comments which deal specifically with the problems, resources and possibilities of sermon composition; occasional poems and prayers which by their beauty and passion demand admission; and minor items which dart some illuminating ray of light upon the art and labor of the minister's priestly and prophetic role.

The articles which are offered will be essays, lectures and reports which explore over the months ahead the whole range of effective preaching. Since The Pulpit is dependent upon its contributors for such articles, there can be no logical or systematic progression from the place and purpose of preaching to the finished work and the concluding prayer that God will bless it and make it fruitful. But the hope is that the whole sermon, from its rootage in God's will that there should be men to preach his redeeming truth to its culmination in men who by that preached truth are won to his will, shall be helpfully examined and described by teachers who are tested experts in the field of homiletics and by those practitioners who out of their own experience have instruction to offer their fellow ministers.

The sermons themselves, however, will remain the primary contribution of this journal to its readers. They will be selected on their merit and on the basis of the contribution which that merit makes in subject and craftsmanship to the purpose of The Pulpit. They will not be used to report the removal of a minister from one parish to another, to add some honor bestowed upon him, to capitalize on his preaching fame, to note some eccentricity in subject matter or preaching setting

(Continued on page 20)

Why Do I Have to Be "Me"?

By Theodore O. Wedel

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands: serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves.
Psalm 100:1-3.

OBSERVERS of child behavior can tell us that one of the earliest philosophical or religious questions asked by the growing boy or girl is, "Who am I?" It is a question which may remain unanswered throughout life. A centenarian can still ask it. Indeed, this question leads to another question of deeper mystery. We ask not only "Who am I?" but "Why am I?" Or, to put it in climactic form, and to phrase it colloquially, "Why do I have to be *me*?" "Why am I what I am?" "Why am I not someone else?"

The mystery of creation, of how the universe, including you and me, came into existence puzzles even the experts at one time or another. But, however an answer is attempted — by the atheist or agnostic as he assigns the first cause to meaningless Fate or Chance, or by the religious man with his belief in a Creator God — one simple fact is clear. We did *not* create ourselves. We had no choice in the creative act which brought us on to the stage of human life. Thrown, as it were, into existence, and given the strange and mysterious endowment of self-consciousness by no choice of our own, we are simply *here*. In addition we know ourselves to be somehow responsible for what we now do with this "I" or "Me." Is it gift, or is it burden?

There may be a man or woman who is satisfied with what Fate or Chance or God has thus hurled into the maelstrom of ongoing history. But such satisfaction is surely rare. If it were a universal experience, envy and jealousy would be banished from our life and we should see a return of the Garden of Eden. Alas, we do envy our neighbors. We do ask, "Why do I have to be me?" Why was I born in a humble village on the wind-swept plains of Kansas, a portion of the globe barren of historical significance, instead of on a famous country estate in Virginia? Why was I given an ugly nose instead of the features of the campus Apollo or Hollywood hero? Why, supposing that I am known as a handsome cavalier, was I not given brains as well? Or, conversely, suppose that I do have a scholar's gifted mind, why am I awkward at a dance and a failure at a party?

This questioning of the created order and our place in it once received classic expression in one of Shakespeare's sonnets. He is describing a mood and situation when things have gone wrong with circumstance and fate — a mood which comes upon all of us sooner or later;

> When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
> I all alone beweep my outcast state,
> And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
> And look upon myself and curse my fate,
> Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
> Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
> Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
> With what I most enjoy contented least. . . .

But whenever we ask this question, "Why do I have to be me?" do we realize what we are really saying? We are expressing, though we may not be aware of the awesome fact, hatred of the power that created us. We are rebelling against God. "It is he that hath made us and not we ourselves," and we do not like his handiwork. He is to blame, and we refuse to forgive him for what he has done to us.

This hatred of the power that made us as we are concerns first of all the circumstances that surround us — place of birth, economic condition of family or group, our biological inheritance. For these I can hurl maledictions on my Creator. When there is added the burden of guilt for the results of my own decisions, this hatred can include myself also as creator. Man can hate both God and himself.

This rebellion can assume many forms. I ven-

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This sermon illustrates the way in which the simplest instruments can be used to probe the profound themes of our Christian faith.

ture to describe briefly three such ways of rebellion.

The first, and most familiar, is the attempt to lose this "me," which I do not like, in the life of the senses. I may try, for example, to drown it in alcohol. I can forget myself, for a little while at least, in a world of dreams. I shall not be here very long anyway. Why should I take this vanishing "I" or "Me" seriously? Let us eat, let us drink, for tomorrow we die. The results of this type of rebellion are Skid Row or the boredom of the luxury hotel — there is not much to choose. An entire book in the Bible sings the doom of this way of escape.

A second mode of rebellion against the Creator is the equally ancient way of the Stoic. I did not create myself, it is true. Blind Fate has me in its iron grip. This Power, however, will be fooled. I possess a citadel in my will which neither god nor devil can conquer. I am, ultimately, captain of my fate and master of my soul. I can be my own god, the creator of my own destiny. I can defy the power of the very stars. I can even, by way of climactic defiance, commit suicide. I did not time my beginning but I can time my end. It is, indeed, a fact of history that suicide has been a kind of last sacrament of the Stoic.

The Ultimate Rebellion

Stoicism, we confess, has its moral heroes. Possibly no rival to Christianity is more appealing. Today it is a fashionable creed under the name of atheistic existentialism. To defy the universe, to defy Fate, be this under the rule of God or only blind chance, rebellion and self-deification can go no farther.

But the Stoic faith, like all idolatry, finds a broken idol at the end of the road. No human being is great enough to play god for very long. Even the suicide cannot escape the fear that the Power which had creation under control may refuse to hand over control of the end of existence also. The Bible might still speak the truth "Know ye that the Lord he is God."

A third form of rebellion against the Creator is escape from reality. "Why do I have to be me?" Perhaps, after all, I don't. I can turn myself into another "I" or "me." I can pretend. I can wear a mask. I can try the art of imitation. I can obey the siren voices of the advertisers on my TV set and transform myself into a glamour girl or man of distinction by buying the right cosmetics or the right clothes or by drinking the right whiskey. Eric Fromm, one of our leading psychoanalysts, has coined a striking phrase, "the commercial self," to describe this rebellion against our created self. Thousands of men and women are selling their birthright as persons to become sham merchandise.

The revenge which life provides for this rebellion against Him "who made us and not we ourselves" is sheer torment. To wear a disguise at a ball may be innocent fun. But to compel oneself to wear it in broad daylight and even in sleep so as not to give the secret away can turn into intolerable slavery. The real Creator God has been replaced by an idol. And idol worship, as the histories of religion illustrate, demands victims — human sacrifice. Dante, in describing the hypocrites in his *Inferno,* pictures them as staggering in utter weariness under a covering of lead. "O weary mantle for eternity," he cries, in pity over such a fate.

The three attempts of rebellion against man's Creator which I have here briefly described may serve as a backdrop for the Christian way of life revealed in the gospel.

"Why do I have to be me?" "Can I not be somebody else?" The answer found in Christianity may at first seem a very harsh one. No, you cannot be someone else. You cannot even, says Jesus, by being anxious add one cubit to your stature. You cannot be your own god. "Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves." You are an actor on a stage and in an action whose direction is in another's hands. You may rebel against your role. You may try to write a plot of your own invention, but the play will have a short run.

But there is one way out. It looks impossible or foolish or even cowardly at first. It is the way of submission and surrender. It is the miracle that happens when an actor, instead of rebelling against his role, accepts it as a gift. He is free at last from the burden of escape. He can take off his mask and the weary mantle of pretense. He can accept himself. The Christian gospel will even tell him that he can forgive himself and shed the further burden of guilt for which man as creator of his own destiny has become responsible and which results in hatred of self as well as of God.

Surrender and Acceptance

Such surrender is never easy. The Bible uses bold language to describe it. It is learning to pray to the Creator God, "Thy will be done, not mine." The New Testament will call this a dying — a dying even realistically symbolized in a sacramental action called Baptism — a dying which, however, has the promise of a rising again. Christians cherish a saying of Christ: "He who loseth his life shall find it." To enter the Christian life involves, so it seems, a kind of suicide. Stoic hero and Christian convert share this sacrament of surrender. The Christian's dying, however, is a joyous suicide, different from the Stoic's bitter hate-filled defiance of God.

Indeed the answer of No to the question "Why do I have to be me?" or "Can I not be somebody else?" was only half true. Christianity can also reply: Yes, you can receive a new self. The mysterious words of the Bible speak of being born again,

(Continued on page 11)

THE SERMON IN THE

ONLY a short time ago our topic, "The Place of the Sermon in the Minister's Task," would have been considered self-answering and superfluous. For the assumption has been, at least in the "free church" segment of Protestantism, that the sermon is the focal point of our entire ministry. Indeed, the word *preacher,* while admittedly more colloquial as well as narrower than *minister* or *pastor,* continues to vie with the others in popular usage. We regard ourselves rightly as being called to preach. We can marshal a large number of texts, from the "Great Commission" to Romans 10, in support of the paramount importance of preaching.

The trouble is that *our* regard for the place of the sermon in our ministry does not necessarily correspond to the people's regard for it. We may hold, with complete biblical and historic legitimacy, that preaching is our main duty as well as the original normative medium for the proclamation of the gospel. But our people, while theoretically accepting this high claim and "enjoying" our sermons, may no longer be greatly affected by our preaching or by any kind of preaching. In fact, their real view of preaching may be mirrored in such phases as "Oh, quit preaching!" or, "Just who do you think you are, a preacher?"

Ambiguities

There is an element of ambiguity, then, about preaching and sermons which we can ignore only at our own peril.

One aspect of this ambiguity has to do with the medium. Only yesterday words were relatively scarce. People probably talked as much as ever among themselves, but there were few public speakers competing for their attention, and those who did speak had to do so in person rather than at a safe distance via radio or television. As for the written word, it was even scarcer: the Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress,* the *Farmer's Almanac,* a newspaper, and, by-and-by, the Sears Roebuck catalogue. In the simple society the preacher's words, as well as the preacher's position in the status hierarchy occupied a considerable eminence.

It is hardly necessary to dwell on present conditions. Competition for people's attention is frantic beyond reason or belief. By word of mouth as well as through the written word, people are being talked into a coma. Our entire way of life is so governed by selling and the mentality of selling that people automatically distrust anyone who tries to "persuade" them. Thus, when even the "hidden persuaders" find it increasingly difficult to overcome the apathy and skepticism of the public, "open persuaders" like preachers dare not indulge in any illusions.

Another aspect of the ambiguity of preaching has to do with the preaching situations. It would seem that the unique setting of the sermon — in a special place full of the symbols of "ultimate concern" and in a special frame composed of prayers, hymns and all the other classic components of Christian worship — would be sufficient to overcome both the listlessness and the "show-me" attitude of the congregation; that it would, in fact, command reverent attention.

The truth is that while reverence is guaranteed, attention cannot be taken for granted; that is, even those who try sincerely to "get the words" do not necessarily "get the tune," partly through our fault, partly because of the worn-out condition of their receiving apparatus. The sermon suffers from handicaps such as the biblical illiteracy of our congregations and the general "softness" of our people, which is the by-product of our material prosperity. There is considerable doubt as to how much people can be "told," even on God's behalf, without giving them a chance to talk back and talk it over. There is also the more basic, more haunting question as to how receptive

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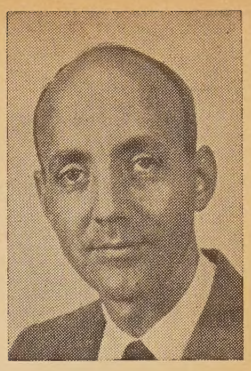
A short course in homiletics, sound yet scintillating. Lay these suggestions over against your own sermons; you will object to some suggestions perhaps; but you will find most of them stimulating as you turn to the preparation of your next sermon.

By John R. Bodo



MINISTER'S TASK

people can be to a gospel which requires crucifixion before resurrection, when both suffering and death are being kept increasingly out of their sight by the building of hospitals which look like plush hotels and the designing of cemeteries which look like formal parks. No, the physical and cultic context of the sermon does not in any way guarantee that even the soundest preaching of the Word will be matched by sound hearing!

A further aspect of the ambiguity of preaching has to do, obviously, with the preacher. This is where the danger is greatest: at the point where our ego collides with the realities of the situation. There is satanic temptation in having even twenty minutes a week to address a group of people uninterrupted and uninterruptible. All the trappings of the preacher — the pulpit gown, the raised platform, the lingering echoes of the hymns — only increase the temptation. The congregation itself caters to it, with our rather willing consent.

So we go on, from Sunday to Sunday, deluded into thinking that just because we have *said* something, something has actually *happened,* while people know (and we ourselves know it in sober moments) that the day of the "preacher" is done; that we are no longer the best informed men in town or even in the church; and that the same faithful who "enjoy" our sermons take the gospel from us with an extra large grain of salt because we are "professional Christians," because we are sheltered from so many of the harsh facts of life, and because — I will say it quite bluntly — preaching is no longer *the thing!*

Before We Give Up

What then? Are we ready to throw out preaching? My answer is: "No, I am not ready to throw it out. Not because of my own vested interests in preaching, I hope. Not because of any rosy illusions about preaching. I am not ready to throw out preaching because any medium which has such deep historical roots in Christian faith and usage and so much momentum in the life of the Christian church, still deserves our best efforts; in fact, because of its very limitations, nothing but our best efforts will do!" Thus, without taking back one single word of misgiving, I shall try to set forth a few suggestions regarding the place of the sermon in our ministerial task: a place greatly diminished but still a place of honor.

The first suggestion I submit is that you insist ruthlessly on being allowed sufficient time to study. One of my former professors used to say, "Preach from your overflow, boys!" He also tried to tell us how to make sure of a continuous overflow, but most of us did not "hear" him, just as most people do not "hear" the Word of God. You may not "hear" me, either, but I am telling you just the same: unless you secure and jealously protect the time it takes to write sermons worth preaching — let alone worth hearing — you will be scraping the bottom of the barrel all your life!

Shirking the Difficult

A further warning: you will discover that in the fight for study time you are your own worst enemy. Your people, as a rule, will leave you alone; or else they will learn to leave you alone; but the chances are you will not leave them alone because it is much easier to visit around or to fiddle with administrative matters than to work with the head. Purposeful reading is hard intellectual work, so hard that we marshal inexhaustible resources of ingenuity to shirk it!

Thus the frenzy of our frittered life and the witness of aging, used-up preachers to the pitiful weakness of the flesh, testify to the soundness of my second suggestion, which is that for the sake of quality, you cut down the quantity of sermons expected of you. No preaching minister who also carries major responsibility for the general program of the parish should be expected, or expect himself, to preach more than forty sermons a year. It can be done. Four Sundays off, six Sundays of truly "high church" Communion Services and two guest preachers take care of the mathematical problem. The major tactical problem may be to get rid of the Sunday evening sermon and the midweek sermon, either by killing one or both of these services or by transforming them into something

profitable. This, too, can be done, provided you do it during your first year — your "honeymoon year."

Cutting down the quantity of your preaching for the sake of quality will do untold good in the long run, even though at first some of the "die-hards" will intimate that you are trying to get out of work. Moreover, substituting some of the many creative alternatives to Sunday evening preaching and midweek preaching will create more work for you, at least until you have a nucleus of members to share the work with you. For it is at these "off" times with their lingering institutional momentum that some of the finest experiments with the "universal priesthood of all believers" can be instituted.

Fewer but Better Sermons

In my experience, short series — six sessions at the most — with appeal now to one, then to another segment of the congregation and with maximum participation by members, are much more effective than any year-round program. By diversifying the appeal you also gain a chance to discover talent in various age and occupational groups rather than drawing all your leaders from a small, self-perpetuating group. In short, having fewer sermons will enable you to preach better sermons; it will also give the people a chance to get into the act in the best Protestant tradition while you lead them into growing competence, looking forward to working yourself out of a job, which is the purpose of our ministry!

My third suggestion applies to the forty sermons you *will* preach. It is simply that you do justice to the service of worship in which the sermon is set and which it is designed to serve rather than to overshadow. It is your responsibility to safeguard the majesty of the Word of God by the unstinted intellectual effort you put into studying and preaching it. It is your equally distinctive responsibility to incorporate the preaching of God's Word in a service of worship so well planned that sermon, hymns and prayers will together proclaim that Good News of which the sermon is only one vehicle.

This may prove difficult, not only from the standpoint of your preparation but from the standpoint of "getting it across" to the congregation. Most worshipers, regardless of a "decently and in order" upbringing, agree with the trustees of the little church in Newark, New Jersey, which I once served. These trustees also acted as ushers, greeting the people at the entrance, receiving the offering in due course but never coming into the sanctuary until it was time for the offering. When I raised the question with their president, a devoted churchman, he told me: "We love your sermons, Reverend, but we just don't go for the preliminaries." Thus my sincere plea is that you enhance your preaching by giving your people a service so coherent and so meaningful that they will learn to worship God beginning at eleven o'clock rather than at 11:30. And this too can be done, but not if you shirk the labor which the preparation of such a service demands. Let me just suggest three obstacles which are, in my judgment, the *downfall* of any attempt at truly "high" worship.

First, the "continuity." I am putting the word between quotes to indicate that I am borrowing it from the lingo of radio and television writing where it means the patter which ties together the unrelated bits of hash which are slung at the public. We do not need "continuity" in any church where there is a printed or mimeographed order of worship. People *can* read. They *will* read if you let them fumble for a few Sundays until they are weaned from their dependence on your "Let us sing," and "Let us turn to."

Secondly, the announcements. The only announcement which must be made orally is the emergency announcement such as the death of the Clerk of Session on Saturday or the reception during the early service of a one-hundred-thousand-dollar incentive gift toward the new education wing. Everything else can be read opposite the order of worship or, preferably, in a weekly newsletter mailed to every home. I usually manage to hold on to my sense of humor, but the pain and humiliation I feel at the distasteful, disruptive drivel which often pours forth between the second hymn and the offertory sentence, makes me want to run and hide.

Off-the-cuff Prayers

Thirdly, extempore prayers. I would forbid them. My reason is not that I would presume to restrict the operation of the Holy Spirit but rather that I would give the Holy Spirit a fair break by letting him operate either through the great prayers of twenty Christian centuries or through my own best effort at prayer writing. In my listening experience, the language and general level of extempore praying is on a par with the announcements, the main difference being that the prayers are a shade more stilted!

In the context of the worship service, some of your most effective preaching can be done by means of the Sacraments: by the manner in which you conduct the Baptismal Service and the Communion Service, whether verbatim from the *Book of Common Worship* or in a thoughtful adaptation for which the *Book of Common Worship* will furnish you with models. A three-minute statement to the parents and the congregation at Baptism allows for more real communication than many a twenty-minute sermon. In the same way, a seven-and-a-half minute Communion Meditation

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How Can the Christian Live In Two Worlds at Once?

Responsible Christian Citizenship

By Byron L. Johnson

THE TENSIONS between the demands of political life and church membership appear to disturb many Christians. Perhaps they disturb the nonparticipant more than the participant. But the question comes up so frequently that it deserves an orderly reply from one who has tried to reconcile these tensions. The proper role of responsible Christian citizenship is a concern to voters and taxpayers, not just to officials and office holders. How can it be defined?

With respect to his role as a citizen, the Christian has relatively little scriptural guidance. In the Gospels we find only a few passing comments by Jesus which suggest the nature of the Christian position. Everyone is familiar with the discussion in which a lawyer asked Jesus with respect to paying tribute, and Jesus' reply took the form of a question: "Whose is the image and superscription?" When the lawyer replied it was Caesar's, Jesus said: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

This recognition of our duality of citizenship in both the temporal and spiritual realms has remained a basic part of Christian teaching ever since. It is consistent with Jesus' recognition of the right of taxation. Indeed, we should not forget that Jesus was born in Bethlehem because his parents had gone there to be taxed.

Asked to identify the Great Commandment in the law, Jesus identified all the law and the prophets as being based on two great fundamental commandments: first, to love the Lord God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind. The second, he said, is like it: to love your neighbor as yourself. Certainly our Christian concern for our fellow man is made explicit by this teaching. In Luke's report the lawyer who asked about the law then asked a second question: "And who is my neighbor?" It was in response to this question that Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, indicating that the word "neighbor" transcended racial, religious, cultural and national boundaries.

It is unfortunate that the lawyer apparently neglected to ask the third question: "And how shall I love myself?" Surely it would have been helpful to have had Jesus' own exposition of the true Christian meaning of self-love. For it is this standard that we are asked to apply to our love for our neighbors. We shall have to assume from other Christian teachings what Jesus' reply might have been to such a third question. Apart from these brief interrogations, we have very little in the actual sayings of Christ which are directly relevant to Christian citizenship.

Paul, a lawyer sensitive to legal concepts, was more explicit, especially when writing to the Romans, who had a highly developed legal sense. In chapter twelve of the Epistle to the Romans, the responsibility of Christian citizenship within the spiritual realm is spelled out along with the general principles of neighborliness.

Two Basic Elements

But it is in chapter thirteen that Paul turns more precisely to the responsibilities of Christian citizenship in the temporal realm. Here we are reminded that rulers are ministers of God for good, and "For this cause pay ye tribute also." Moreover, Paul stresses that the law is a deterrent to evil, not to good works. He restates certain criminal commandments of Moses, and concludes that these and any other commandment are briefly comprehended in this way, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Thus Paul restated Christian teaching as embracing two basic elements: to be law-abiding, and to live by the law of love.

There is no suggestion that this responsibility extended to participation in lawmaking or in law enforcement, but merely to obedience. The rea-

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Every man, it is said, can preach at least one sermon. The founder of this magazine once said that the question is, "Can he do it again?" Our judgment is that this is not the first or the last good sermon that Congressman Johnson will preach.

sons for this may be found in verses eleven to fourteen of the same chapter: "For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand."

Doctrine of Withdrawal

The belief in the imminence of Christ's second coming certainly supports the doctrine applied by the early church of withdrawal from any active participation in the state. The role of Christian citizenship in the early days was largely based upon the principles stated above. This early concept may well correlate with the fact that their experience was as residents of a universal Roman Empire. A single autocrat dominated the entire area of their experience — Italy, Greece, Asia Minor and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Later, as Christendom moved into the whole of Europe, and as the Roman Empire dissolved, there developed during the Middle Ages temporal rulers who at least preserved the appearance of obeisance to a spiritual ruler who was head of the Christian church, and Christian citizenship was reinforced by the philosophy that the states themselves were under divine control through the superior power of the church. Still later, there developed the concept of the divine right of kings.

But with the break in the Christian church arising from the Protestant Reformation, and with the gradual development of secular states divorced from direct spiritual superintendence by the church, it became essential to develop a new dimension to responsible Christian citizenship.

New Dimension Necessary

The premise of the Protestant Reformation was the recognition of every man as a child of God and as directly responsible to God for every aspect of his life and action. With the gradual unfolding of political democracy in America, it became evident that the state itself was conceived as a creature of responsible Christians acting as responsible citizens with all other citizens, in an effort to create a tool of their collective and common will. The affirmations of the natural rights of man, set forth in the Declaration of Independence, were restated in the United States Constitution. Its preamble reads: "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordaine and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

In effect, our forebears felt it to be their responsible Christian duty as citizens to modify the structure of the state for these purposes. And in their statement they translated the obligation to "love your neighbor" into such terms as "promote the general welfare."

We conclude, therefore, that the responsibilities of Christian citizens may vary from age to age. And they may also vary from place to place. It may well be that the doctrine of withdrawal is applicable not only to Caesar's autocratic Roman Empire, but also to Christians living in autocratic and dictatorial lands today, especially if hope of democratization is remote.

On the other hand, it seems evident that we who are American Christians have inherited a structure of government which was designed by God-fearing statesmen to be a "Minister of God for good." Under these circumstances we must examine our hearts and minds to see whether we are acting in our own time and place as responsible Christian citizens.

Do we accept the fact that the actions of this government are our actions, and that we are responsible for their nature and course? Do we think that God in his righteous judgment will hold us responsible or blameless for the sins of commission and sins of omission of our various levels of government?

Personally Accountable

As I see it, a Christian's citizenship responsibility in 20th-century America permits no escape from personal accountability for our collective behavior. We cannot assume that government is something other than ourselves. It is our common instrument. Its decisions are our decisions; its choices are our choices. Therefore its accomplishments are our accomplishments, and its failures are our failures.

On several occasions, as in the parable of the talents and the description of the Last Judgment, Jesus reminded us very forcefully that we would indeed be held accountable. And we are accountable in terms of our talents, our privileges and our opportunities. We cannot hide behind the doctrine of withdrawal even if it is available to cover others. Our proper Christian response is recognition of *mea culpa.*

This means in practical terms that the candidates nominated in your political party are *your* responsibility; that the officers elected in your elections are *your* responsibility; that the decisions made by your government are *your* responsibility. It means that the strengthening of justice within the framework of law and order is your responsibility, and that the promotion of the general welfare which is possible in the job you hold is your responsibility and mine. My position is not that the church should enter politics, but that the churchman should fully accept political responsibility and accountability. The church is the minister to the whole community and should preserve its capacity to serve that role.

Those of us who are in the Congress recognize the awful majesty of the power of the United

States government. We recognize that we are transient trustees of that power. We recognize the solemn duty incumbent upon us to exercise that power prudently, soberly, wisely, creatively, within the full dimension of responsible Christian stewardship.

But I would be remiss in my task if I did not remind you that the duties of responsible Christian citizenship are duties of us all, and not merely on election day or in precinct caucuses, but every day, at home, in the community and on the job. When each of us recognizes that government is indeed our business, and that it is our business as a part of God's plan for the conduct of human life, and when we recognize our obligation to co-operate with that plan, then we should all begin to appreciate the larger dimensions and the solemn duties of responsible Christian citizenship.

We used to have special services in our churches in which members would bear witness to God before one another. We are mistaken if we think "witnessing" has gone from our midst. What we say and do, our every word and deed, witnesses our faith before our friends and neighbors. We need to examine ourselves to know what is the nature of our own witness.

A Negative Citizenship

It is a tragedy that much of secular America sees the Christian role in citizenship in essentially negative terms. The church has been so strident in its denunciation of certain particular social evils such as liquor and gambling that it has frequently seemed to neglect the larger issues of social justice and social responsibility. We have forgotten Micah's brilliant reminder, "And what does the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy god?"

Surely our view of responsible Christian citizenship and Christian social action must be built upon the fundamental commandment to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. This is a great affirmation — it is not simply a negative abhorrence of particular evils.

Finally, we must remember that our citizenship is still dual in nature. We are also citizens, or at least pilgrims with applications pending for admission, in the Kingdom of God. The spiritual kingdom remains, when temporal kingdoms crumble into dust. In the accountability of our stewardship, the test of our love for our neighbor is the searching question. Did we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, even the least of these — our neighbors — the children of God, and not just in America? Did we love our enemies? Were we peacemakers? Did we recognize that to us has been committed a gospel of reconciliation?

We are called to be more than Christian Americans. We are called also to be American Christians.

Must I Be "Me"?

(Continued from page 5)

of becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus. Christianity's demand for the surrender of the self to its Creator is, however, not surrender to a tyrant deity. It is surrender to a Father, or, surrender to a Lover. The story revealed in the Bible is precisely a love story — the Creator wooing his rebellious children to love him in return. It is the breath-taking epic of God visiting man and breaking his proud self-will by dying for him on a cross.

Nor does the wooing end with the story of Christ during his earthly life. As a legacy of that life there exists in the world a society called the church — a society of the surrendered and reborn. To cite once more the strange yet wonderful language of Christian faith, those who have entered the new relationship with the Creator God through Christ speak of themselves as having died with him and then risen with him.

And in this fellowship of the newborn the question with which this sermon began is answered. "Why do I have to be me?" "Why should I accept myself as I am?" Because if you do not, you will miss the wonder and glory of being loved for what you are and as you are. Here, in the company of the repentant and the forgiven, you do not have to fear rejection of yourself as you are. You can take off your mask. Even if what is revealed behind that mask is ugly, so ugly that you cannot bear the sight and cry out in shame for a hiding place or search madly for the discarded mask, there is One who can endure the sight. It is the very God who has made you. Indeed, there is a fellowship which can endure the sight. All were once in rebellion but suffered broken pride under the wooing of Christ in a manger and on a cross, entered into the joy of surrender and are now a fellowship of prodigal sons returned to a Father's home, rejoicing in a banquet together.

It may seem like a strange ending to a Christian sermon to close with a quotation from the Mohammedan Koran. But that classic of the religion of Islam contains more than one insight inspired by prophetic wrestling with eternal truth. The quotation reads as follows: "From God there is no flight, but unto Him." A modern poet has taken this jewel phrase and has added two more lines. The resulting triplet reads like a summary of the parable of the Prodigal Son, greatest of parables in our New Testament:

> From God there is no flight, but only unto Him.
> Against a father's sternness no revolt avails,
> A child's sole refuge is within his arms.*

* Friedrick Rückert, "Strung Pearls"; translated by Walter Lowrie, *Our Concern with the Theology of Crisis* (Boston: Meador Publishing Co., 1932). Used by permission.

Finding a Scapegoat

By Gerald Watkins

FINDING a scapegoat to blame for our failures is by no means a modern practice. It is as ancient as man. Adam, when confronted with his act of disobedience, blamed Eve, and said, "The woman thou gavest me for a companion, it was she who gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate it."

In the sixteenth chapter of the book of Leviticus is an account of a fascinating procedure followed by the early Hebrews to eradicate the sins and mistakes of the people. Aaron, spokesman for Moses and the first high priest of Israel, is commanded by God to proceed in this fashion: "And a live goat shall be presented. And Aaron shall lay his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of Israel, and all their transgressions, even their sins. And he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all the iniquities of the people." What a simple formula for the eradication of a people's sins!

This idea of an easy "out" has crept into Christian theology. Jesus has become the scapegoat, and all that is required of us is to cast our sins upon him and he, in some miraculous fashion, will free us from our iniquities and their consequences. You cannot get rid of evil as easily as that! Salvation from sin is a process which calls for co-operation between God and man. Any theological doctrine which tends to free man from the responsibility of tackling his own sins is a dangerous teaching. You cannot throw your sins on Jesus and expect him to be your scapegoat. Paul was aware of this dangerous tendency when he advised his followers, "Work out your own salvation for it is God that worketh in you!" Only when God and man work together can sin be overcome.

See how this vicious practice of projecting our guilt works out in life! During the early days of the Christian movement, Nero, the Roman Emperor, in order to divert attention from the problems of his empire, selected the Christian as his scapegoat with the result that countless hundreds perished in the arena, torn by wild beasts or burned at the stake. Adolph Hitler accused the Jews of being the number-one problem of Germany. How can we so soon forget the gas chambers of Dachau where thousands of those unfortunate people were put to death?

In Russia today the scapegoat is the West. Everything wrong in the world is due to the capitalistic society, according to the communist line. The United States in particular is painted in bloody colors, both in Russia and communist China, as the warmonger intent upon conquering the world. Here in the United States, communism is the scapegoat, the cause of all our ills, so we say.

Senator Fulbright, addressing the Senate during the recent revolution in Iraq, reminded us of the danger of this state of mind. He said, "For years we have taken the easy way. Let something go wrong, whether it be in China or Nigeria, and we have had a ready answer. The Soviet Union was behind it. What a perfect formula for the evasion of reality and, may I add, what a futile formula! If there is any single factor which more than any other explains the present predicament in which we find ourselves, it is our readiness to use the specter of Soviet Communism as a cloak for our own failures. Look through the record of the past ten years and what does it show? When it is a question of spending on anticommunist propaganda through the blatant defamation program, tens of millions of dollars are poured out willingly without much critical judgment. But when it has been a question of exchanging students, of interchanging the best of cultural achievement between nations, there has been much rending of hair over economy and the parsimonious doling out of the shekels. We have on a grandiose scale provided peoples of the underdeveloped nations with the weapons of destructive warfare, and have been miserly in providing them weapons to wage war on

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This message gives current illustrations of the ancient and innate compulsion in man to project his failure and his guilt upon things, circumstances and other men.

their own poverty, economic ills and internal weaknesses."

Let us look at the scapegoat way of thinking on a more personal basis. We all have our scapegoats: the student blames the teacher when his marks are not what they should be; the man who is not promoted in industry blames the company. Even in the matter of church attendance, our parents are the scapegoats. They either did not encourage us to go to church by their example, or they took us to church too consistently.

Beams in Our Eyes, Too

Ministers too are guilty of shifting the blame. If our ministry is not as successful as we think it should be, we blame the age in which we find ourselves, the secular society, the materialistic outlook of people in general. What minister has not at some time or another cried in the words of Shakespeare, "The time is out of joint: O cursed spite, That ever I was born to set it right!" And so the world is full of men and women trying to justify themselves and to ease their consciences by passing on their sins and failures to another.

There is a real danger in this habit for at least two reasons. In the first place it blinds us to our own weaknesses. It promotes pharisaism which sees the mote in a brother's eye, but ignores the beam in one's own eye. I remember discussing with a friend our readiness to see the faults of others, at the same time failing to see our own. In the course of the conversation this parent said, "It's quite true, we do tend to see the weaknesses of others while ignoring our own." And then came this revealing comment: "I would readily see the faults in my son, if he had any."

And then again, this scapegoat habit of thought tends to excuse every evil, even murder itself, on the premise that the wrongdoer does what is evil not because of any fault of his own, but because of his early training, or his unfortunate environment or because of evil companions. I sincerely sympathize with people who have been handicapped, brought up in sordid surroundings, the products of a broken home or the victims of an unjust social system. But there are hosts of boys and girls who have grown up under such unfortunate circumstances who, nevertheless, surmounted difficulties and developed noble characters in spite of their surroundings.

We can carry this sympathetic attitude toward wrongdoing too far, until we develop a society of irresponsible citizens who are content to absolve themselves of all blame by heaping their sins upon an unfortunate past.

We need to face our sins and inadequacies and confess them frankly. "God, have mercy on me a sinner!" and "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" ought to be for us habitual prayers. We need to recognize the truth of the familiar Negro spiritual, " 'Tain't my father or my mother, but it's me, O Lord, standin' in the need of prayer."

We need also to recognize our responsibility in shaping the thought and conduct of our own day and generation. This often means standing firmly for convictions which may not be accepted by the majority. Charles Kettering, who directed research for General Motors for three decades, spoke in Rochester, New York, some years ago. Although he was seventy-six years of age when he made this address, he was looking toward the future with anticipation and hope. Someone asked him why he was so interested in the future, and he answered, "Because it is in the future I will be spending the rest of my life." His appeal on this occasion was for adventurous thinking. He decried the conservatism of industrial leaders who could prove mathematically that certain things could not be done, only to have others go ahead to actually do them. He mentioned the ridicule heaped upon the Wright Brothers by conservative minds who were positive that never would a machine be invented that would be able to fly.

Needed: Our Forefathers' Vision

Progress in any sphere of endeavor is the result of fearless thinking which sees beyond the years. Our forefathers who visualized a United States of America were not in the majority. There were more Tories than revolutionists in the colonial era. The American Revolution succeeded because a minority believed in it, and gave their lives for it. John Adams reminded us of this when he wrote, "Posterity, you will never know how much it cost the present generation to preserve your Freedom. I hope you will make good use of it. If you do not I shall repent it in heaven that I ever took half the pains to preserve it." Like our forefathers we must accept individual responsibility in helping to shape the thought and action of our day and generation instead of blaming something or other for "the times being out of joint."

Ridding ourselves of the whining attitude, and assuming a sense of responsibility will give us a consciousness of purpose in life and drive away the feeling of futility which so often overpowers us. It will ennoble each day with the thought, "My life has meaning. God needs me and my influence to help him build a better world." A collect in the Book of Common Prayer speaks to this condition: "Eternal God, who committest to us the swift and solemn trust of life. Since we know not what a day may bring forth, but only that the hour for serving Thee is always present, may we wake to the instant claims of Thy Holy will, not waiting for tomorrow, but yielding today." And I would add "not making excuses, not offering alibis, not seeking scapegoats, but exclaiming with a burning sincerity, " 'Lord, here I am, use me!' "

Place of the Sermon

(Continued from page 8)

can convey to people the matchless lyrical quality of the gospel more eloquently than the plodding epic of a full-blown sermon.

You may wonder by this time why I am not talking about the sermon, about "The Place of the Sermon in the Minister's Task." But that is just what I *am* talking about. I am talking about what I believe to be the rightful place of the sermon in the context of our total communication of the gospel.

Thus my fifth and final suggestion: Spend as much time and effort on your nonpulpit speaking and on your nonsermon writing as you do on the preparation of your sermons. The reason is quite simple: only one third of your members ever hear your sermons, and your membership in turn is only a fraction of your parish. Therefore, having cut down your sermons to a maximum of forty a year and every sermon to a maximum of twenty minutes, work on your marriage services and your funeral services with the concentration of so many Pauls on Mars Hill. For this is where you will have a chance to proclaim the gospel of reconciliation at true crisis times, be it the crisis of joy or the crisis of grief.

For External Use Also

For the same reason, work on those speeches to the Rotary and the Kiwanis, the Lions and the Elks. Remember, some of the most active "clubmen" will be men wholly strange to, or deeply estranged from, the gospel, so that it may take a triple measure of intelligence and labor to affect them. Nor dare you be smug about the mediocrity of these clubs or of any other secular organizations. There is so little difference between church and world, between pillars and flying buttresses, between twice-born saints and thrice-bored sinners, that your preparation for the Kerygma must be equally thorough, whether it be designed for internal use or for external use.

Let me add a footnote on the importance of your *writing,* for here we have a whole realm of unexplored opportunities for the fulfillment of our preaching task. There is, for one thing, the ministry of the four-cent stamp. A personal letter can often do more than either a sermon or a necessarily diffuse visit. Letters can be sermons, depending on the timing and the content rather than on the length.

There is also the congregational letter, or your "Letter to the Editor," or your religious column if you have one. In each case, you are reaching people who never come within earshot of your sermons, and you are reaching them in a way which allows for a second helping and for leisurely digestion, provided your message is truly nourishing and attractively served.

Thus, I conclude — anticlimactically but with devilish deliberateness — with a plea: for God's sake — yes, literally, *for God's sake* — work on your syntax, your style, your spelling! Make sure that your proclamation of the gospel is not dishonored by a half-educated illiteracy which instead of inviting the Holy Spirit, insults him.

Thoughts on Preaching

PUT INTO your pulpit the strength of the everlasting hills, and it will not need the coruscations of the aurora borealis. Give to your preaching the vividness of lightning, and your people will not crave the phosphorescence of fireflies. — *Austin Phelps*

✚ NEVER draw out of a text the meaning you know is not there. If your text has not your truth in it, find some other text which has. If you can find no text for it in the Bible, then preach on something else. — *Phillips Brooks*

✚ THE MORE special the subject, the more you will find to say on it. Boys think just the reverse. . . . Take it as a general rule, the more you narrow the subject, the more thoughts you will have. And for this there is a philosophical reason. . . . In acquiring knowledge, the mind proceeds from particulars to generals. — *James Waddell Alexander*

✚ A SERMON is a weapon of war. Not the tracery enameled upon its blade, not the jewelry that is set within its hilt, not the name that is stamped upon it, but its power in the day of battle, must be the test of its merit. — *Henry Ward Beecher*

✚ A MODERATE sermon is like a winter's day, short and clear and cold. The brevity is good; the clarity is better; the coldness is fatal. Moonlight preaching ripens no harvest. — *Thomas Chalmers*

✚ I VENERATE the man whose heart is warm, whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life, coincident, exhibit lucid proof that he is honest in the sacred cause. — *William Cowper*

Love Has No Boundaries, Knows No Countries, Will Not Be Hemmed In

Other People—Other Places

By David K. Barnwell

TRAVEL, we are told, is broadening. It is also deeply disturbing. It is uncomfortable to be broadened! To be forced out of the easy and acceptable grooves of one's familiar ways is, for most of us, a rather disagreeable experience. This is doubtless why you find so many Americans, when they are abroad, seeking the most American hotels, the nearest to American food, and demanding the most American service that can be obtained. They think they want to travel, but actually they demonstrate that they want to be as close to home as possible.

If that is true in material matters, it is even more true in other areas. To find other people thinking differently; to discover standards of life at variance with our own, to be confronted with nations whose ideological and spiritual viewpoints are contrary to ours, can be profoundly disquieting. It is a human tendency to want everyone else to be like ourselves, at least in what we think are essentials, and to dismiss with a superior shrug those who do not conform to our ideas.

It was my experience recently to visit in rapid succession an unusually wide diversity of peoples and places — to be confronted with the incomprehensible masses of Asia, with the jungle folk of Cambodia, the medieval Nepalese tucked away in the lower valleys of the Himalaya Mountains; with the nearly illiterate Afghans, and the people who live under the communist dictatorship in Russia and in its satellites.

Again and again we were reminded that we American, Protestant, Christians are a very small minority on this globe of teeming humanity.

From time to time as we journeyed some words of Jesus recurred in my thoughts: "I am," he says in John's Gospel, "the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep . . . and I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also. . . ." "Other sheep — other folds"; other people — other places. I saw some of them, and in truth they were very "other."

As we journeyed I kept asking myself: What is the Christian view, the Christian truth, about these strange, distant people? As a Christian, how must I think of them?

My first reaction was a rediscovery — a new and deeper understanding of our doctrine of the universal God. He is not just my Western, white, Protestant God. He is their God also. Wasn't it Lincoln who said God must love the common people, he made so many of them? Well, he must love these other people, these Asians, these Russians, these innumerable millions, he made so many of them!

The Universal Shepherd

If we believe as we must, being Christian, that God is the God of a Shepherd-heart, then we must allow him others in other folds, unlike ourselves, whom he loves as much as he loves us. In the whole Jewish-Christian tradition one of the most cherished of all symbols for God, one that has been luminous for men in all generations is that of the Shepherd.

But there is also, in all men, a deep-rooted tendency for self-love, a spirit of exclusiveness that shuts out all who do not reflect the same virtues and vices we find in ourselves. We distrust, dislike, even hate all whom we find to be different from ourselves. We call them aliens, foreigners, "dagos," "niggers," "chinks," with the venom of our displeasure exposed in the words.

To become a Christian in any real sense is to change all that. These words drop out of a Christian's vocabulary. He never uses them again. He sees all men of all races, of many differences, as the children of the universal God. He becomes a disciple of one who said, "I am the good shepherd. Other sheep I have not of this fold."

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To call this sermon a travelogue would be to give it the kiss of death. Even so, when a man in his traveling finds the whole world in the embrace of God's love and weaves the heart of the gospel into the report of his trip, he preaches with power.

He is the Universal God, the Father of all mankind: or he is only some idol that we have fashioned in our own image.

A second teaching of our Christian gospel which came home to me through my travels is our belief in the dignity of every man, that in God's eyes every individual has a separate and inviolable worth. It is difficult to keep to that idea among the inconceivable hordes of Asia. The crowding pressure of mass humanity in places like Calcutta and Benares, in the thousands of little mud villages, scattered like prolific seed-beds over the vast plains of India, in the enormous population of a small-island people like Japan — in such conditions of humanity in the mass rather than as individuals, single, separate persons lose their dignity in the oppression of sheer numbers. But now and then some experience corrects that error.

An Unforgettable Smile

Allow me to relate to you one such simple experience — quite intangible and perhaps not anything that can be made meaningful at second hand. I was waiting in a crowded market square in Benares one hot morning. We had been exploring the incredible rabbit-warrens of that unbelievable city of narrow, twisting lanes, where innumerable thousands live so densely packed one can think only of anthills or hives. I had come out into the open square to wait for our car. I stood watching the unending, colorful parade of people: dead bodies being carried to the Ganges for washing and then burning; strange "holy men," bedaubed with paint and ashes; endless merchants with their various wares; all the immense indescribable variety of an oriental city. And always, as we had learned, when westerners stand in such a place, curious bystanders gather round to stare, interested in clothes we wear, the odd shoes of westerners, the camera dangling from the shoulder. Not hostile, not friendly — just blank, curious, staring. For no reason at all, my eyes caught the eyes of a young man, some rough tribesman in from the country with a load of wares over his shoulder. A rather ugly, maybe brutish face: no culture, no education, dull-eyed, staring. As our eyes met, there was perhaps a faint flicker of fear in his but no change of expression, just the stony, unblinking wild-animal gaze. We looked into each other's eyes, and thoughts, quicker than words, raced in my brain: "I wonder what he thinks. Does he think? What kind of soul lives in that, to me, alien body?" Then, quite without thinking, I smiled, and my eyes must have said "Hello" across the impossible barriers. The transformation was amazing, as though a light went on back of his eyes. He smiled back with a very radiant, unexpected smile. There was no speech possible, and what was there to talk about? We simply smiled, and there was a bridge across which two utterly alien souls met for a fraction of time. For the next five minutes he stood there in the crowd, shifting his heavy load, moving a bit as the crowds surged and watching me intently. Then the car was there and I climbed in. At once he moved so he could watch in the window. The auto began to roll, edging out of the crowd. I looked back and raised my hand in a gesture of salute and farewell. He raised his, and the smile broke over all his face. And we were gone. An unimportant few moments, and yet to me a significant and memorable one: in the swarming hordes of life, an individual; in the vast impersonality of India, a single person; between two unknowns, communication. On the inscrutable face of Asia, one unforgettable smile.

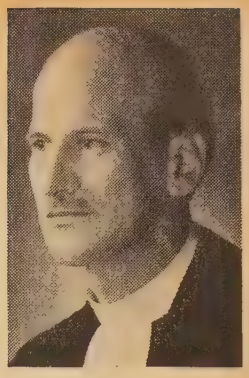
A reminder of an eternal principle: that the terrifying, numbing pressure of earth's millions, must never diminish the value, the imperishable dignity of the individual. He also is one whom God made and loves; for whom the Son of God died. In the boundless economy of God that Indian lad has his eternal place and his immortal destiny. As a Christian I am considered to respect and in God's name to love him. My theology must never be kept in any little pigeonhole; somehow it must include all men everywhere, for each one is a child of God, and the Divine Spirit has its dwelling in every soul. There is a light behind every eye if we can only know how to turn it on!

A Sunday Behind the Iron Curtain

Go with me now behind the Iron Curtain, to two churches, one in Tashkent in the southeastern corner of the Soviet Union; the other two thousand miles away in the beautiful city of Leningrad on the Gulf of Finland. It is Sunday morning in these Baptist churches. The pews on each side are packed uncomfortably solid with people. All aisles are filled with them standing four or five deep. The doors on each side and the rear vestibule hold all that can be accommodated; outside the windows in the garden are more people. They sit and stand so for two full hours. They sing with magnificent fervor and amazing beauty. I have been spotted at once as a visitor, an American, and taken to the platform. Late in the service my interpreter Vladimir whispers that the minister is welcoming me. Everyone smiles toward me and some, sitting nearby, reach over and shake hands. A moment later I find myself in the pulpit, Vladimir by my side, replying, thanking them, giving them greetings from my church in America, telling them that a stranger is glad to find himself among the family of God, an alien who is "at home" with them in the house of God. Then for a moment I tell them that all of us, being Christian, belong to the Prince of Peace, that in America we also want peace and brotherhood among men.

(Continued on page 19)

The Triumph and Fragrance of a Christian Life Are Portrayed by Paul and Available to All Men



The Pageant And the Perfume

By Johnstone G. Patrick

WHAT a thrilling and enthralling thought it was that young Rupert Brooke, the soldier-poet of World War I, so eagerly expressed in his poem "Peace":

> Now, God be thanked, Who has matched us with His hour,
> And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping.[1]

But what a much older St. Paul writes in his second letter to some Corinthian Christians is infinitely more thrilling and enthralling. He says: "Wherever I go, thank God, he makes my life a constant pageant of triumph in Christ, diffusing the perfume of his knowledge everywhere by me. I live for God as the fragrance of Christ, breathed alike on those who are being saved and on those who are perishing, to the one a deadly fragrance that makes for death, to the other a vital fragrance that makes for life."

The Greeks have a word for it! The Greek word "thriambos" which St. Paul is here putting to such splendid use is in itself significant, shot through and through with spiritual autosuggestion. It is the equivalent of a Latin word which was employed to portray the gorgeous military processions in which the illustrious ones of the empire rode in memorable triumph through the great gates of Rome and made their way to the capitol, escorted by soldiers and carrying with them their captives and their booty. Thus St. Paul is grateful to God that his life is a "thriambos," a pageant of victory and a continuous one at that, not the spectacle of a swiftly passing hour.

[1] Reprinted by permission of DODD, MEAD & CO., from *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke.* Copyright 1915 by Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc.

JOHNSTONE G. PATRICK, *minister of First Presbyterian Church, Sayre, Pennsylvania, is a native of Scotland and a graduate of Spurgeon's Theological College in London. He has served pastorates in London, the Channel Islands and Ontario, Canada.*

This sermon, a sensitive and skillful wedding of language to theme, is marked throughout by exceptional literary qualities: phrases newly turned but never bizarre, illustrations integral to the smooth flow of the message, scriptural expositions authentic but not pedantic. It is evidence that expository sermons need not be mechanical but can have poetic power.

Let us look at this fellow who has what some might call "the colossal cheek" to consider himself as a conquering commander, who has the daring to identify himself with the great and famous soldier-sons of Rome, and who is likening his little life to a large, uninterrupted train of triumph! He is a small-statured man, maybe a cripple, with the sure signs of premature age upon him. His face is marked with ugly scars and his ill-clad body bears many telltale brands. God only knows what he has gone through, what he has suffered for the sake of the Christ! Does he look like a victorious Roman general? See him again only a few years later. He is in captivity in Rome. One of his ankles is chained to a wall of his dreary, damp dungeon. One of his wrists is fettered to a Roman sentry. How sorely such chains must chafe him! With his other hand he is writing a letter to a few fond friends in Philippi and, looking over his shoulder, we can see what he has just finished writing. "I can cope with everything by Him Who strengthens me. . . . I have indeed enough and to spare. I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what your means allowed, a sweet-smelling perfume, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. . . ."

Another year or so, still caged and chained, we see this fellow — the amazing Apostle Paul — awaiting his last appearance before Nero. He expects, if spared, to spend another winter in this same Roman dungeon. "Please do your utmost," he is telling a Lystrian lad in a letter, "to come quickly. . . . Only Luke remains with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is valuable to me in administrative work. . . ." "And," he adds, "when you come bring the heavy jacket I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, *particularly the parchments*"!

Under almost similar circumstances, Dr. Frank Boreham reminds us in his book *The Luggage of Life* that St. Paul's great translator, William Tyndale, was lying some fifteen centuries later in his damp cell at Vilvorde awaiting the final stroke which set his spirit free a few weeks later. And, as in St. Paul's case, winter was coming on. "Bring me," he writes, "a warmer cap, something to patch

my leggings, a woolen shirt, and above all, my Hebrew Bible"!

Particularly the parchments! Above all, my Hebrew Bible!

St. Paul's "thriambos" has little or nothing to do with life's outward trappings, then, but it has everything to do with life's inner spirit and disposition, with life's spiritual supremacies. In company with Christ he is always conscious of a radiant presence and an overwhelming power. He is always aware of spiritual resources so tremendous and so available that, whatever the outward circumstances of his life, he knows himself to be completely in control of the situation. He can face up to anything with which his lot in life can confront him, knowing that it has no power to maim his mind, that it cannot shatter his spirit. Men may take his body and make a wreck of it, beat it and batter it, torture it, starve it, even kill it, but they cannot harm his soul. His life, thank God, is being made "a constant pageant of triumph in Christ." What a life! Even his enemies must have seen something of its worth and wonder as they watched it soaring up to its heights, like a mountain rising sharply and sublimely to its snow-capped summit in the skies. No Roman sentry, I will wager you, ever saw St. Paul, as he had seen other prisoners, sitting in his dungeon with nothing to do and dejectedly fingering the fetters on his ankle or counting the links in the chain that chafed his wrist or numbering the stones of the four wet walls about him. In his prison suffering as in his life, St. Paul was too triumphant ever to think of stooping to self-pity. With Cyprian he would have said, "These are not chains, they are ornaments."

An Unconquerable Spirit

Without a shadow of a doubt, among all Christ's conquering heroes St. Paul still stands the tallest — a mountain of a man if ever there was one. And when he is not standing steadfast in the teeth of trial, we can see him moving majestically toward some conquering climax. "Wherever I go, thank God," we may still hear him say, "he makes my life a constant pageant of triumph in Christ. . . ." What a man and what a life!

Yet St. Paul also likens his life to a perfume — "the perfume of His knowledge." "I live for God," he adds, "as the fragrance of Christ, breathed alike on those who are being saved and on those who are perishing, to the one a deadly fragrance that makes for death, to the other a vital fragrance that makes for life."

He is thinking again, of course, of what happens on the Sacred Road, the oldest street in Rome, when a conquering hero returns. Maybe that very morning, in his mind's eye, he saw as through the slit window of a cell the hazy atmosphere, or scented the incense which was burned in all Roman victory parades. If so, then he glimpsed the grim and grisly sight of the confounded captives whom the victor brought with him, some of whom were led off later to the dark precincts of the dungeon, there to be butchered, while the others were allowed to live after being baited, not because they were more worthy but simply as a showy tribute to the pity of the Romans. The odor of the reeking incense fell upon all the captives whether their lives were spared or taken from them.

"When the wind," writes Mary Webb, in her exquisite essay *The Joy of Fragrance,* "comes along secret ways with the laugh of a naughty child who has found a treasure and will not tell of it, we know where he has been by the scents that cling to him like burrs to a truant lad."[2] A valley of roses exists, I am told, so extensive and with such rare and choice blooms that the air is laden for miles around with the fragrance of the flowers. All who pass through that valley discover that the diffused perfume clings to their very clothes for a long time afterwards, so that every person they meet and greet knows exactly where they have been.

Troubadours of Truth

For the part they played on the Day of Pentecost, we recall, Peter and John were thrown into prison. The next day they were arraigned. These troubadours of truth, to say the least, behaved most bewilderingly. A night in jail had proved powerless to cool them off. Seeing how bold both of them were, and sniffing the air about them, their accusers and the spectators arrived at the only possible conclusion: "they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Like St. Paul, these two saints had started to "live for God as the fragrance of Christ. . . ."

The pageant and the perfume! Perhaps one's first reaction is to imagine that St. Paul's description is decidedly overdrawn, or that his experience of life was unparalleled, unique and neither intended for, nor available to, the more ordinary run of mortal men. We may even tell ourselves that like so many other profound passages in his love-illumined letters, this is a bit of beautiful prose penned by a man with a powerful poetic temperament, and that it is characterized by all the freedom and exaggeration of poetic license. And so we are driven to dismiss it as a mere flight of fancy, an excusable expression of extreme egoism, or, admitting its reality, for St. Paul, to pass it by as an experience in which we cannot possibly have a share. St. Paul, we say, lived in a different world from ours. He was endowed with far greater gifts than we are, which is true, and had access to resources which are not available to us. And then, when we have almost convinced ourselves that the triumphant and fragrant life is not meant to be our lot, we remember that this man in what he says so well does

[2] Mary Webb, *The Spring of Joy* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.). Used by permission.

not try to set himself apart in solitary splendor. He holds himself to be only one — and that "less than the least" — of a vast multitude which no man can number, of every age and aspect, clime and circumstance, rank and race, who talk in similar terms.

Indeed, it was St. Paul, and he more than any other writer of his time, who immortalized the humble ones of "the household of faith," the saints in strange places. Asyncritus, Phlegon, and Hermas — and who, I ask you, were they? We cannot say; for we have in his sixteenth chapter of the Letter to the Romans over thirty names which are little better than Assyrian hieroglyphics to the general reader. Is not the insertion of such names a waste of valuable space? In some sense or other this long catalogue of seeming nobodies is utterly uninteresting; but we must never forget the fact, St. Paul seems to say to us, that the most uneventful life may be linked to eternal issues, and this renders the trivial awful and the commonplace sublime. Such names had no place on the scroll of Rome's illustrious worthies; but heaven does not measure greatness according to the vulgar standards of earth. Power and wealth, spiritual ignorance and secular learning, pride and prejudice were arrayed against Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas and other obscure Roman Christians; but in that Sodom of sensuality, in that Gomorrah of greed and gaiety, they lived healthy spiritual lives; and although the struggle often seemed sadly unequal, still they paved the path for the Christian gospel's triumph and secured its final ascent to the throne of the Roman emperors. Like coy violets in a dark dell, they filled a fetid city with the fragrance of "the better paradise," though they never indulged in any shallow show of self-advertisement. Each of them is eloquent proof, if proof were needed, that

> As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
> Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
> So when in Sodom dwells a child of God,
> All heaven's own sweetness seems around him thrown.

Revival Within the Church

Offering no apology to the many "evangelists" roaming our land, we need to reiterate that the revival most needed in our disjointed day is a revival in the church. We need, among all Christians, a revival of the rhetoric of simple Christlike goodness — just living the radiant and abundant, the triumphant and fragrant, Christian life, enjoying and employing the grace of God; and in the enrichment of such an experience showing forth how thrilling and enthralling life may be — even under unenviable conditions — when it is possessed by the Son of God, guided by the Conqueror of death and darkness, inspired by the Son of Man, One whom our forbears in the faith were so fond of styling, in one of their sacred songs, "the Rose of Sharon."

Other People

(Continued from page 16)

There are audible murmurs and here and there a sob, and I see tears coursing down their cheeks. Then the minister says they will sing again for us. And in words I cannot understand, but recognize by the tune, two thousand voices are singing "God Be with You, 'til We Meet Again." On the last stanza they begin to wave their handkerchiefs and it is almost more than we can take. The service is over; they crowd around, hands outstretched. It takes nearly a half-hour to leave, walking down between the long aisles of people banked four or five deep outside the church, to the very car door, reaching out their hands, touching one's arm, smiling, crying. Hundreds line the sidewalk, waving until the auto has carried us out of sight. Church — in Russia! "Other sheep I have, not of this fold; them also, I must call."

The Christian doctrine of atonement has many interpretations, but underneath them is surely one simple truth: that God has made us to be at one with him and with one another. Atonement is at-one-ment, in all of life's relationships. All over the world people seek to be one; the hunger of human hearts is for relationship. There in the city of Benares, two strangers in a crowded market with no language but a smile find a unity that speaks an eternal word. There in the Soviet Union a congregation of Russians reaches out in the love of Christ to find and express to a stranger the unity of all who have found their lives in Him. "God," said the apostle John, "is love," and in that eternal truth is our atonement.

Poor, tired humanity tries many roads to fulfillment, but there is only one road: the road of reconciling love. All other roads are blind alleys. And this road of reconciling love, of indefeasible good will, has no boundaries, knows no countries, observes no barriers, will not be hemmed in by man's pathetic prejudices and bitter selfishness. It leads out across the earth, through southern communities in our own land, over the oceans among strange peoples, behind iron or bamboo curtains. It is the King's Highway and upon it the Prince of Peace makes his way, bearing the cross of pain and sorrow, taking the shame of men's pride and evil, men's bigotry and blindness, and matching all of that with the love that never fails. It is a long road with many rough, often lonely, places and yet companioned, too; for those who walk it now find themselves in a divine company. And in its ending, far beyond the horizons of our day, it reaches that Kingdom into which men shall come from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, "and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd."

Pro vs. Amateur

By Caxton Doggett

A FEW weeks ago I preached on a theme which had been debated hotly the previous Sunday in one of our adult church school classes. At the close of the service one of the class members said to me: "I'm glad to get the viewpoint of a professional." His remark set me to thinking how strange it is that the words "amateur" and "professional" can in turn be a high compliment or a biting criticism.

The word "professional" is always a compliment to the extent that it denotes a high quality of performance. In the field of sports you flatter a tennis player or a golfer if you tell him, "You play like a pro." Likewise in music we compliment a singer if we tell him he sings well enough to be a professional.

But the term "pro" refers not only to the quality of performance but also to the act of taking money for one's performance. And at this point the term loses some of its flattery, while the term "amateur" takes on high respect. Amateurs play golf and tennis because they love the game. Pros play for money. The moment one takes money for playing golf, he has turned pro. Between the two motives, the amateur's are rated higher by most people.

This is especially true in the field of religion. I recall how a certain layman used to sing the praises of one of our Methodist bishops, until he learned that the bishop's fee for a widely publicized evangelistic meeting was a thousand dollars.

The religious professional is handicapped by his professional status. There is always the question of how much of his praying and preaching and visiting is done because he is paid to do it (often very generously!) and how much he does because he loves God and his neighbor. Here the pro would like to keep some of his amateur standing.

There is another problem connected with religious professionalism. The creative activity of the Holy Spirit in the world has time and time again found expression in the lives of amateurs rather than the religious professionals. Why is this so? Whatever the reason, it should humble the pro. In the Bible the religious professional gets rough treatment. In the King James Version of the Old Testament, for some reason unknown to me, the Hebrew word for shepherd is translated "pastor" only in the book of Jeremiah. In that book there are seven references to pastors. Six are woes against pastors; the seventh is a promise that God will send better pastors. And we ought never to forget that not a single pro signed up with Jesus. The disciples were all amateurs, as was Paul. Personally, I would feel better about it if at least one pro had seen the light and cast his lot with Jesus.

Jesus made a religious professional the villain of one of his most famous stories. He said the priest passed by on the other side. Perhaps the best known part of Dostoevski's great novel *The Brothers Karamazov* is his account of how Jesus was treated by the pros when he returned to earth. Dostoevski located this event in Seville, Spain, a long time ago. But there is little reason for thinking that the pros today would find Jesus any less annoying than did the Cardinal in Seville. How hard it would be to run a church today if Jesus were in town!

Is the truth not this, that we should aspire to be pros in the high quality of our work and at the same time to keep the amateur's love for what we are doing? We want and need professional skill in handing down the precious treasure we have received, but at the same time we desperately need the amateur's freedom from tradition that makes him the vehicle for new creative activity by the Holy Spirit. And above all we need the amateur's freedom from the professional's frantic struggle for salary, position and recognition. In short, we need to make it possible for God to use religious professionals as effectively as he uses amateurs. Otherwise we would be better off and the progress of the Kingdom would be speeded if by profession we turned tentmakers. — *Caxton Doggett is minister of The Methodist Church, Winter Park, Florida.*

Then a Plan

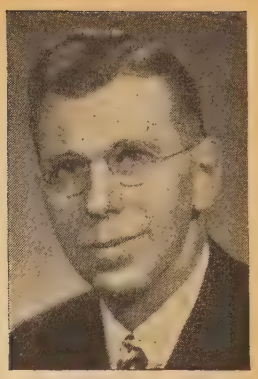
(Continued from page 3)

or for any other purpose foreign or incidental to the cultivation of good sermons.

Here again, this purpose, a worthy and consuming one, is dependent for its fulfillment upon those who contribute sermons to this journal of and for contemporary preaching. It will be *for* good preaching only if it is *of* good preaching. If what it hopes for — excellency and effectiveness in the pulpit — is not to some extent already a reality, then this journal has few tools with which to work. This may correctly be interpreted as a plea for contributions, a plea addressed especially to parish ministers. The staff prefers but will not be limited to the use of sermons which rise out of a parish setting; it agrees with George Buttrick that "Only the pastor, or a man with pastoral imagination, can preach." Obviously this saying admits many men who do not occupy the conventional parish setting; but, on the other hand it also excludes many who do. The Pulpit's first concern is that its purpose be forwarded and that its standards be met. If the staff may append these conditions to its invitation, then it can say to its readers in the words of Churchill, "Give us the tools and we will finish the job."

KYLE HASELDEN

Transforming the Treadmill
Of Household Tasks into a Vocation



Who Sweeps a Room

By Walter L. Cook

SOMEONE has said that four women, a mother, a sister, a wife and a daughter, are needed to make one man all that he ought to be. Many of us will have to admit that by this standard we are incomplete men because we are the handiwork of only a limited amount of feminine concern. We may not have grown up with a sister nor enjoyed the affection of a wife or a daughter. For instance, take the apostle Paul. As far as his own family is concerned we lack evidence that he was the product of female solicitude. He does not even mention his mother.

However, he does make an affectionate reference, in the sixteenth chapter of Romans, to a certain woman. In the first twenty-six verses he introduces a courier, he warns against heretics and he greets his friends. One of those friends was Rufus, and in the thirteenth verse Paul writes: "Greet Rufus, eminent in the Lord, also his mother and mine."

"His mother *and mine.*" Apparently Paul adopted a mother — Rufus' mother. She was one of the many women Paul must have known. In this chapter several are mentioned: Priscilla, Mary, Persis and others. One is a deaconess, another is a fellow laborer, still another is a hard worker. These women were his esteemed co-workers, but apparently Paul held Rufus' mother in special regard. Did she possess some quality of character in which she excelled Lydia, Priscilla, Lois and Eunice? Lydia was a merchant, a dealer in purple; Priscilla was a tentmaker. These women assisted Paul as he preached the gospel, but Rufus' mother is nowhere referred to as a co-worker with the missionary. Since Paul alluded to her as a mother, she must have been a homemaker. Surely she was a woman who knew how to transform the treadmill character of household tasks into a vocation. If there had been such a custom in Paul's day he might have given her his vote as "Mother of the Year."

Someone has said that the joy of motherhood is what a woman experiences when the children are in bed. Her labors from son up to son down appear to be routine and repetitious. Surely, we often think, little creative intellect is required in managing a home. What is creative about seeing that Jimmy keeps his morning appointment with the vitamin bottle, that he gets to the dentist for a semiannual checkup, that he learns to blow his nose quietly? How can she know that in reducing confusion, untidiness and irregularity in the home to a minimum she is fulfilling a great mission?

Drab Lot or Noble Calling?

All such supervising activity seems fruitless. Probably many mothers feel they are missing out on fun and excitement. The political activity of a Margaret Chase Smith or the scientific achievements of a Madame Curie or the stage triumphs of a Helen Hayes have undoubtedly caused many a housewife to see her own lot as drab and prosaic. Listening to a coloratura render an operatic aria on the radio, a mother may feel that manipulating a steam iron is a barren business.

How then can a mother find fulfillment in the humdrum? How shall she envision the routine of homemaking as a vocation? She can only achieve this as she comes to see her housework, her care of the children and her home responsibilities as a holy calling. If she can understand that God has called her to a great ministry, her life can be rich and full. Paul undoubtedly profited from the help of Priscilla and Lydia and Persis and many others. Without them he would have been hindered in his work. But for Rufus' mother he must have had an even higher regard. He must have acknowledged her as a woman who thought of homemaking as a vocation, a noble calling.

WALTER L. COOK, *professor of preaching and pastoral relations and director of student field work at Bangor Theological Seminary, graduated from Greenville College in Illinois and Andover Newton Theological School. An ordained American Baptist minister, he has served pastorates in Hebron, Calais, Farmington and Bangor, Maine. Mr. Cook is the author of* Meeting the Test, *published this year by Abingdon Press.*

Some occasions require a homily rather than a full sermon and Mother's Day is often such an occasion. The special days of the church year, the national holidays, the Sundays which celebrate some phase of family life solve one problem: the theme of the sermon. But year after year they pose a more difficult problem: How can the old theme be turned in a fresh and winsome way?

How can a godly mother glorify drudgery? How can she transform the routine of housekeeping into the magic of homemaking? Plainly she must develop a perspective through which she can see her everyday task as a holy vocation, and a conviction that what she is doing has ultimate significance. Routine toil did not prevent an English shoemaker from seeing beyond his repetitive tasks to the sublime in his work. His gravestone reads thus: "To Thomas Cobb, who mended shoes in this village forty years to the glory of God." Like Thomas Cobb, a mother may learn to see God's hand in her sewing and sweeping and serving. As a poet said three hundred years ago:

> Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws
> Makes that and th' action fine.

If she can see her home as a classroom where young people are receiving their training for future living, then she will be lifted in spirit above the earthy demands of housekeeping.

Whether in town or country, or even in the city, her home must have a window toward the mountains, a view of far horizons. She must be able to think of her home as a shrine. At the breakfast or dinner table, or in the jogtrot of everyday existence she must make her impact upon the young lives about her. Let her illumine for them the meaning of the ordinary acts of everyday life. In her work let her seek to inculcate in them clear moral standards through her own quiet words and telling example.

Inspiration and Challenge

Her homemaking vocation can become an inspiration rather than a burden as she quickens within her children an interest in and desire for the excellent. Among the earliest memories of Woodrow Wilson was that of hearing his mother reading aloud from *The Iliad, The Idylls of the King* and *The Faerie Queene*. Wilson's mother kept open a window toward the mountains. Apart from the hours spent in preparing meals, washing dishes and using the broom, she knew another duty as she opened the windows of her home on far horizons. She did not permit the local to become the total.

It seems strange that some mothers who would snatch a child from before a speeding bus, or would drag him away from the edge of a cliff, feel that they are invading a child's rights if they pull him away from moral danger. Mothers who take seriously their vocation as homemakers will study to make their homes places where their children will receive the guidance to thread their way through the temptations and pitfalls of their early, crucial years.

A mother's vocation never becomes more significant than when she is guiding the character growth of her children. She struggles to see that her children are not thrust into the wilderness of contemporary living without a compass. She daily plans how she may place in their possession clear-cut ethical standards and moral principles that will abide with them and guide them throughout life. With all the imagination she can muster she will teach them of the redemptive love of Christ who gave himself for their salvation. Can any vocation be more challenging or more rewarding than that of a mother?

In South Africa a boy once threw a stone that fell at the feet of a man who was passing by on the road, and he stopped quickly and picked it up. For the moment he saw the stone, the man noticed something the boy had missed. He cut and polished the stone and all its inner fires burst forth. Revealed was a diamond, one of the finest in the world.

Glory in Her Task

The mother who sees her task as the greatest of all vocations must do the same thing. If she sees its possibilities, to her the daily task will not be colorless and dull. She will see what others have missed: the inner glory of her childrens' lives. Through prayer and planning she will strive daily to bring out that glory. And from her home, and homes like hers, will go forth young men and women who will serve God and mankind: physicians, teachers, musicians, farmers, ministers and missionaries. They will be both her natural and her spiritual children for she has given them her own vision and hope and faith.

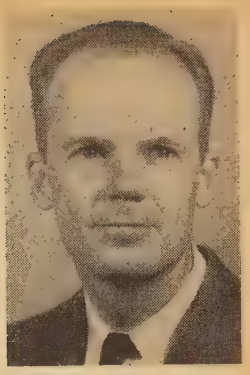
This morning we are celebrating Mother's Day; it is a mean offering that we bring to her. To set aside one day a year to sing her praises is to give her but scant recognition for the significant place she takes in our human scheme of things. We are eager to pay tribute to women who have won renown as educators, artists and scientists. There is a glamour attached to being a Madam Curie or a Maria Callas. But the total accomplishments of such women are infinitesimal when compared with the achievements of all those who have channeled their talents into home and character building.

ONE ON THE PREACHER

"Two things," said Kant,
"Fill me with breathless awe:
The starry heavens and the moral law."

But I know *three,* more awful and obscure:
The points the preacher makes,
The lay endure.

ROUD SHAW



Mend Your Speech

By Donald Douds

ONE of our greatest responsibilities is our use of words, the manner in which we speak. If you doubt this, consider these two statements: first, from the book of Proverbs, "Life and death are in the power of the tongue"; and second, from our Lord, "By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned." Yes, words can tear down, destroy and kill. Or, words can build up, create, give life. And by our words we will be judged — found good or evil.

Think of the importance of words. They are the basis of all civilization. And how powerful they are! "The pen is mightier than the sword." Vicious words can destroy a person's reputation. Angry words can ruin a home, leave life-scars on children. Careless words can wreck a friendship. Words of mistrust and propaganda can undermine peace among nations and cause war. Words, like fire, can serve or destroy. Truly "life and death are in the power of the tongue."

God has given the power of speech only to human beings. Therefore, as stewards of Christ, we have a special responsibility to use our words in a Christian way. To handle this responsibility, he also gave us certain guiding laws.

In the first place, it is a moral sin to use words heedlessly and destructively — to tear down, criticize, injure — just as it is wrong to set fire to someone's home or injure someone physically. "With his mouth, a godless person can destroy his neighbor." Our words are like our automobiles. We are responsible if they harm others. Yet, how carelessly we toss about mean, unkind words that hurt and besmirch character!

A teacher once told his pupils on a windy day to tear sheets of paper into small pieces and throw the pieces into the wind. As they watched the wind scatter the paper, the teacher said, "Now retrieve the paper." The pupils looked at him in dismay. "Those pieces of paper," said the teacher, "are like your words. You can never retrieve them either."

It matters not if our unkind words about people are true. We still have no right to say them. Remember Jesus' defense of the woman sentenced to be stoned? He did not ask if the accusation was true. Only, "Let him without sin among you cast the first stone." Words have a beautiful and useful purpose. To misuse them is a tragedy and a sin. It is like using a Cadillac to haul garbage.

Judged by Our Words

When we use words destructively we hurt, most of all, ourselves, because by our words we are judged, and others react to us by what we say to them. "He who guards his mouth keeps his life, but he who opens wide his mouth will have destruction." There is no faster or more direct route to unpopularity, to strife and enmity, than through unkind gossip and criticism. Nothing travels so fast as gossip. What you say about others usually gets back to them. The book of proverbs teaches: "A perverse person scatters strife everywhere . . . a whisperer separates chief friends." And conversely, good words bring many friends. "He who loves pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king will be his friend."

Then, we have no right to waste words. Says Proverbs, "In many words are transgressions." What does that do to careless, idle gossip? Why not use your words as carefully as in writing a telegram? Keep this in mind: What you say you already know; only by listening do you learn. Did you ever read this saying of Jesus: "Every idle word a man speaks, he shall give account of in the day of judgment"? This is a sobering thought, that someday, before God, we will be held responsible for every word we spoke.

In view of this, silence *is* often golden. Abraham Lincoln said, "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt." And the Proverb: "Even a fool, when he holds his

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DONALD DOUDS *was graduated from the College of Wooster and Union Theological Seminary and holds a Master's Degree in psychology from Columbia University. He has served Miami Shores Community Church, Miami, Florida, and is presently pastor of Hanover Street Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, Delaware.*

"Mend your speech a little, Lest it may mar your fortunes"; thus does Shakespeare understate the potency of words. This sermon agrees with the sterner declaration of Proverbs: "Life and death are in the power of the tongue."

peace, is credited wise." This poem sums up well our first guiding rule:

> Before you speak, make your words pass three gates,
> These narrow gates: first, is this true?
> Then, is it needful? In your mind
> Give truthful answers. And last
> And narrowest: is it kind?
>
> And if to reach your lips at last
> Your words pass these gateways three
> Then you may speak and not fear
> What the result of speech may be.

The second guide to a Christian use of words is: Bridle not only your tongue but also your ears. "An evildoer gives heed to wicked lips; a liar to a mischievous tongue." Not only should we not listen to idle or destructive gossip or criticism, we should refuse to allow such to go on in our presence. I know a woman who, when gossip starts in her presence, says, "Let's talk about something else." She will not listen. It has a good effect on a group. If only we all had the self-control and courage to do that! Proverbs says, "He who utters a slander is a fool." Remember: "For lack of wood the fire goes out; where there is no whisperer, contention ceases."

The Temptation to Retaliate

Even when we hear gossip about ourselves, we should ignore it and refuse to retaliate. General Robert E. Lee was asked his opinion of a certain man. "He is a fine and able man," said Lee. "But General," he was told, "do you not know that he criticizes you and runs you down?" "Yes," replied the General, "but you did not ask what he thinks of me; you asked what I think of him." Our greatest example is Christ, who, when he was reviled, reviled not.

The third rule in handling this precious responsibility of speech is: Always use your words constructively and helpfully. Use them to encourage those around you — to strengthen the weak, to hearten the discouraged, to befriend the lonely, to lift up the oppressed, to inspire the young, to brighten the aged.

You have these opportunities every day. Every word you say affects someone for good or evil. How are you using your power of words with your family, friends, those at work? What are your words doing to them or for them? Are you inspiring or discouraging, helping or harming, building up or tearing down those around you?

One of the finest compliments ever paid to anyone was said to Job by one of his friends: "Your words have kept men on their feet." When you know Job was the kind of man who steadied others, you know why he had friends. Anyone who speaks words of help, hope and encouragement will have friends. "Your words have kept men on their feet." What a wonderful tribute! Can that be said of you? Do your words keep others on their feet? Are you like Job — do you inspire faith, hope and good will? "The mouth of a good person is like a fountain of life. The lips of the righteous feed many. Words kindly spoken are like apples of gold."

If you would like your words to keep others on their feet, then speak with faith in mankind. "Open thy mouth for those who cannot speak, in the cause of all who are desolate. Open thy mouth and minister justice to the poor and the needy." And, speak with faith in ideals and in the high possibilities in life. "A scoffer is an abomination to men . . . cast out the scoffer and contention will go . . . but a gentle tongue is a tree of life."

And, most important, speak with faith in Christ. We speak every day of so many other things — business, family, pleasures — why so seldom of Christ? One of the tragedies of Christianity today is our silence, outside of the church, about Christ. We miss hundreds of opportunities to speak naturally and sincerely to others of Christ — to invite them to church, to encourage them in a Christian life. This is the foremost duty our words must perform: to speak so that others are attracted to Christ and to his way of life. "You shall be my witnesses," said Jesus.

Dear friends, in a moment this service will end, and you will begin again to talk. *How* will you talk? I pray for you and for myself this prayer of the psalmist:

"Set a watch, O god, before my mouth. Keep thou the door of my lips. Incline not my heart toward any evil word. But let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O God, my rock and my redeemer."

A Prayer

WE do not ask, omnipotent God, that axheads shall swim or that water be turned into wine. The miracle we seek is that our desires shall share thy purposes. Grant us this supreme change which makes possible both eternal life and the Kingdom of heaven.

We confess that we need a drastic, miraculous alteration, for our desires are selfish and undisciplined; our plans are prompted by prudence rather than by faith.

Open our eyes that we may discern beyond the patterns of our frail contriving that finer, nobler self thou desirest each of us to become and that greater career thou offerest us.

Enter into our lives, O God; liberate our good impulses and greaten our purposes until they become eager partners of thy will. Perform this miracle in us today. Amen. — *Harold Leonard Bowman, pastor emeritus, First Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Illinois.*

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Left in Crete

By Roy Pearson

ONE of the most surprising experiences for the minister is his discovery that the family of God is less than Godlike. In a minister's early days, this surprise is likely to take the form of simple astonishment. In his later years, it may have hardened into bitter cynicism. But early or late, it is a stumbling block that irritates and injures him. Sometimes it even drives him completely out of the ministry and into another profession.

Perhaps this was the problem of Titus. Paul had left him in Crete. Apparently Titus did not like the Christians he found there, and when you stop to think about it, you can scarcely blame him. By Paul's own admission there were "many insubordinate men, empty talkers and deceivers" who were upsetting entire families by teaching for base gain what they had no right to teach. One of the local inhabitants had said flatly, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons," and just as we are about to venture the hope that this local inhabitant may be exaggerating, we run into an equally flat statement by Paul that "this testimony is true."

Crete does not seem to have been one of the choicest plums in the Field Work Director's basket of available opportunities. The Placement Office would doubtless have kept it in one of the lower drawers of its files, and although one cannot be sure exactly what had preceded this letter from headquarters, Paul had apparently concluded that Titus considered his parishioners unworthy of their pastor. For in the very first sentence after his salutation, Paul launches into what appears to be a vigorous defense of an allegedly outrageous appointment. "This is why I left you in Crete," he says, "that you might amend what was defective."

At one time or another most of us are left in Crete. Some incompetent geographer may have confused his nomenclature, and the maps may carry our parish as West Podunk, Vermont; or Smithville, New Hampshire; or Milltown, Massachusetts. But the maps do not matter. If Crete is the home of insubordinate men, empty talkers and deceivers, of liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons — that is where we have been left, and we like it no more than Titus. In fact, we rather wish we had a good address for Paul today: we could write him a thing or two about some of the modern refinements of the Cretans' ancient aberrations.

Modern Cretans

Take, for example, the Sunday school superintendent who confided to a seminary student that he gave his time to the church only because he was going to run for the mayor's office and it never did any harm to be known as a loyal churchman. Or the woman who told her minister that she had once sworn a five-years' grudge against a neighbor, that she had kept her vow like a faithful Christian, that the time would run out next week, and that she had already decided to renew her pledge for another five years. Or the board of deacons who met in formal session and officially forbade their minister to condemn local gambling, or to oppose the establishment of another saloon in the district or to admit any Negroes into the church's fellowship. Or the new resident of the town who informed the pastor, when he called on her, that she and her family were looking for "a good, modern church which won't make any demands on us."

One night another minister and I were talking about the amplifying system in his sanctuary. "You won't find this an easy church in which to speak," he told me. "We have quite a few dead spots here." There are quite a few dead spots in most of our churches. Not acoustically. Spiritually. And we wonder whether Paul might not compose a different letter for his Tituses if he knew what Crete is like today.

In the window of a London shoe store I once saw a sign which read, "Misfits Bought and Sold," and thinking of the churches we serve, we wonder whether Paul really understands how many misfits we have in our stock. Perhaps he would like to buy a few himself; we could certainly spare them.

There is no doubt about it: the churches we serve are often in wretched condition — some of them even worse than the Crete that Titus knew. Not all of them are quite so bad as we sometimes think, but bad they surely are; and some disgruntled pastor need only form a Fellowship of Titus to win a host of colleagues for its rolls.

Yet, if Crete has not been altered with the years, and if Titus still rebels against the profanation of the holy places and wants a better spot in which to serve his Lord, are we to assume that Paul has learned the error of his ways and being given the chance, would call his Titus home? Or would he merely pull out of his episcopal desk a carbon copy of his earlier letter and say today precisely what he said some nineteen hundred years ago: "This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective"? Would he point out that the very facts which Titus was submitting as justification for taking the next boat home were the strongest possible reasons for staying right where he was?

The insubordinate men, the empty talkers and deceivers; the liars, the evil beasts and the lazy gluttons — these were not a detraction from Titus' calling but its validation. Had all the Cretans been saints, Titus would certainly have been warranted in picking up his passport, but not when the Cretans were demons. And the more he said about the Cretans' wickedness, the more obvious it became that he was just where he ought to be. That was why Paul had left him in Crete: to amend what was defective.

ROY PEARSON, *dean of Andover Newton Theological School and an editorial associate of The Pulpit, is a frequent and welcome contributor to these pages.*

This homily will not keep many pastors in Crete but it may help them bear those ills they have . . . until they fly to others.

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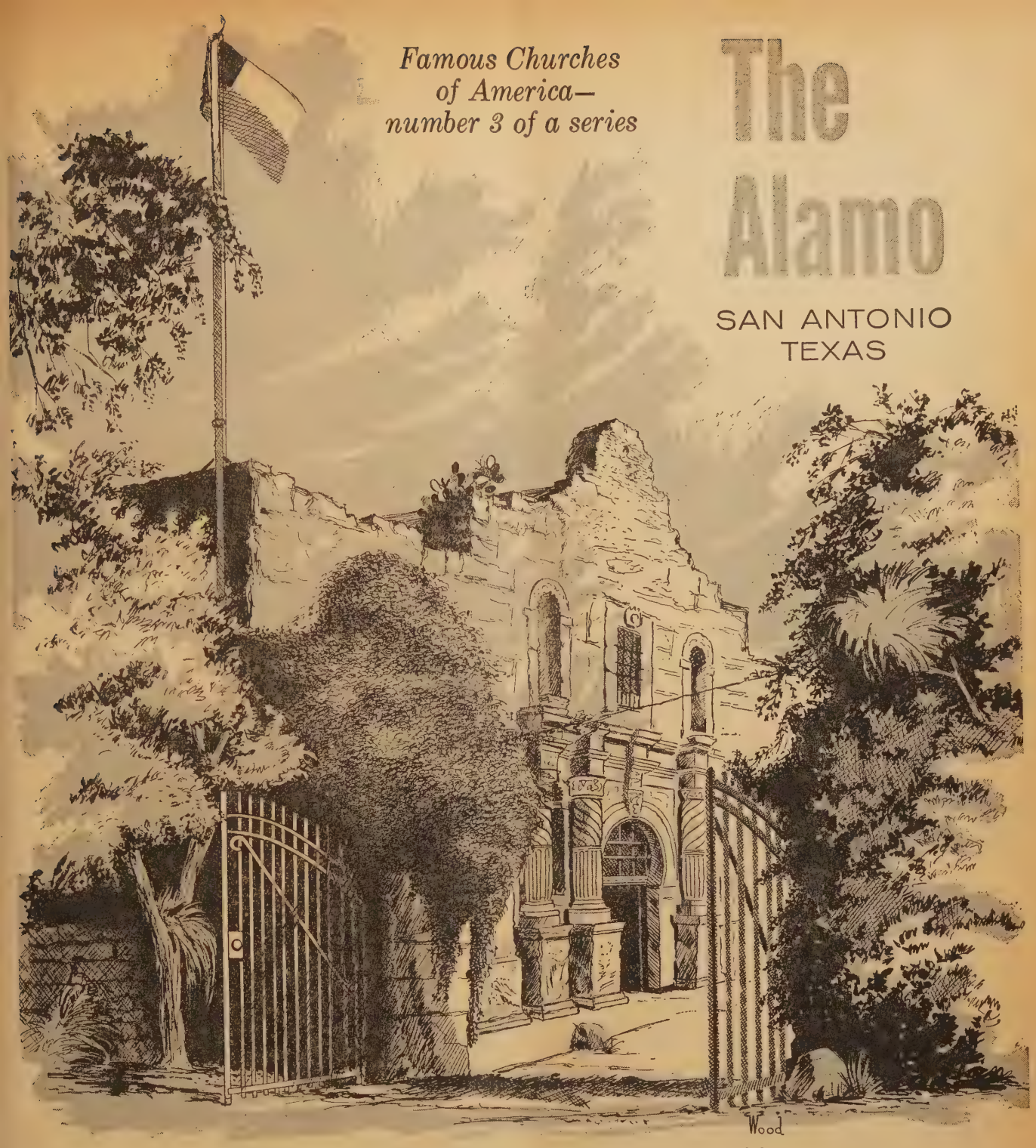

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Book Reviews

VIEWPOINTS, *Some Aspects of Anglican Thinking. Edited by John B. Coburn and W. Norman Pittenger. Seabury. $5.00.*

THIS collection of nineteen essays of aspects of Anglican thinking at mid-20th century by as many different specialists in the facets of the life of the church should have been an extremely valuable contribution for laymen and especially for clergy whose ordinations were years ago. It should have merited Bishop Gibson's commendation in the Foreword to those "who are willing to pause in their Christian busyness and give time for Christian thought." *Viewpoints* fails to meet the need or merit the commendation. Those who read the entire book will find some gold, but not enough for the effort when there are richer veins.

Most of the gold will be found in "The Laity Today" which develops the theme that "lay men and women are needed to participate in *church work* so that more laymen can learn, can dare, to be the *church at work* in the world"; and in "Christianity and the Intellectual" which, in spite of some forty sets of dashes and parentheses, has deep and disturbing things to say about Christian communication. The quote from a student in "The Church and Psychology" should not be lost: "We tend to overwork Christ rather than let him do his work through us"; and for those who do not know about it, there is a good presentation of the new Urban Work, as in Jersey City, in "The Church's Mission I."

The general agreement among the contributors to this book of the prime place of the Holy Eucharist in all of the life of the church is significant. — *Herman J. Smith, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Charleston, W. Va.*

MEDITATIONS ON THE GOSPELS. *By J. Calvin Keene. Abingdon. $2.00.*

THE emphasis in this splendid book of meditations is on the ancient form of the art of "mental prayer." These meditations are meant to be used thoughtfully, quietly and reverently as Scripture is read. Instead of preaching or teaching, its pattern is simply that of asking questions which help to clarify the meaning of the lesson, and to stimulate thoughtful commitment and resolution to follow the call of Scripture. The introduction gives directions for making these meditations meaningful by suggesting they be read with periods of silence to stimulate concentration on the message, followed by discussion to form a sort of "depth Bible study." There are about eighty such meditations on passages from the four Gospels.

The form of these meditations intrigues me. A relief from the usual "quickie" and stilted devotions, they will be useful in any situation, whether it is a man sitting quietly by himself searching the Scriptures, or a cell group, or a larger group that meets for meditation and inspiration — *Clifford Ansgar Nelson, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn.*

THE FULFILLMENT OF LIFE. *By Owen M. Weatherly. John Knox. $3.00.*

DR. WEATHERLY'S choice of title is an apt description of what his book strives to do: spell out the basic laws of a fulfilled life.

Soundly based on Scripture, his discussions of the divinely-ordained laws of truth, kindness, faith, liberty, righteousness, love, etc., bring a refreshing reminder of the disciplines of the Christian life. Here is no "Ten Easy Lessons" book but a realistic appraisal of what terms must be met to fulfill life, and they are God's terms. One may want to talk back to the author, as I did on his "function of human law," but isn't that in itself the test of a book's worth — to arouse reaction?

On the whole, Dr. Weatherly has given a thoughtful analysis of his quotation from Augustine: "The law was given . . . in order that grace might be sought; grace was given, in order that the law might be fulfilled." — *William O. Byrd, First Methodist Church, Pine Bluff, Ark.*

CORPUS CHRISTI, *The Nature of the Church According to the Reformed Tradition. By Geddes MacGregor. Westminster. $5.00.*

RECENTLY I had a late-evening discussion with a Roman Catholic priest and a Protestant minister. We were discussing the church and I found myself in greater agreement with the priest than with the Protestant minister. The priest and I couldn't agree on a doctrine of the church, but we did agree that the divisions within the church were tragic.

The other Protestant thought denominations were simply a natural, and even desirable, outgrowth of self-expression and a human proclivity for variety.

Geddes MacGregor is an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland who sees nothing natural, nor desirable, in a divided church. In scholarly fashion he approaches the

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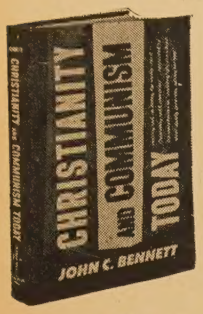

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doctrine of the church historically and theologically.

The author has little time for a platonic, invisible concept of the church. Just as the soul must have a body, so the Spirit works through the visible church and not in an independent, detached manner. Regarding the obvious incongruity between the purity of Christ and the impurity of the church, MacGregor says: "A man's face may be so covered with scores that I may not notice that he is my old friend and so pass him by on the street; but this is not to say he is invisible or that he is dead."

The author also strikes hard at Protestant individualism: "It is not as individuals that we 'offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies'; only the Church, Corpus Christi, dare do this, must do it, and does it with jubilant thanksgiving." He puts Calvin on the side of the Cyprianic doctrine that there is no salvation outside of the church. "Like Cyprian, he [Calvin] teaches that he cannot have God for his Father who has not the Church for his Mother."

Christ, according to the classic, scriptural definition of him, is the basis and only ground for unity in the church. The church is made visible through the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments.

This is not a simple book, but then neither is the doctrine of the church. — *Robert M. Herhold, St. John's Lutheran Church, Mound, Minn.*

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1717 — Two Hundred Forty-three Years — 1960

From the Turn of the Year

WHEN the 1950's turned to th 1960's some time ago I faced u to the fact that my bookshelves carrie a number of worthy volumes tha would haunt me, should I relega them to oblivion. With less sense c sequence than I could wish, here a summary of attitudes. *Worship, Study of Corporate Devotion* is th *summa liturgica* of Luther D. Ree (Muhlenberg, $6.75), the most note of 20th-century American liturgica scholars of Lutheran orientation. Th book is a comprehensive and mos helpful survey of Christian devotio in all its phases. I have given it careful reading; to chip away at it edges would hardly detract from th sense of debt I owe Dr. Reed. A the same time it seems important t say that *Worship* does not necessaril always represent the latest phase i maturing evangelical liturgical scho arship. Often it seems to be wagin battles against the new conservative of worship. Reed cannot help bu speak of the return to the classi organ in somewhat patronizing tones His words about the recovery of an cient purposes of church buildings i contemporary forms could certainly b more enthusiastic and his illustrate examples of church architecture rep resent an age that is going, neve to return. Only one of the illustrate churches would be taken seriously b today's architectural journals an schools. These are minor cavils; an Protestant would profit from the hour spent in the company of this ol master. Such grace and dignity! Yo don't often get that kind anymore

Father Roy J. Howard, S.J., ha written a manual for Roman Catholic to be used on *Liturgical Retrea* (Sheed and Ward, $3.00). It will b valuable to Protestants who are suffi ciently literate to do their own addin and subtracting, re-emphasizing an de-emphasizing. Its three main sub sections deal with Baptism, Confirma tion and the Eucharist. Much of i is obvious, but its coherence com mends it.

An anthology of worship a cut belo these two as far as impact is concerned largely because of its unevenness, i a collection by Charles L. Wallis, hardy perennial in this field of pro viding useful illustrations in sermon and inspiring material for private de votion. The Audens, the Eliots, th Frosts, have to coexist with man poems of an ephemeral character And yet, rescued as they are fro the pages of soon-lost weekly an monthly magazines, who knows bu that Wallis may be an angel unaware preserving a deserving poem for gene ations to come? His book's title i *A Treasury of Poems for Worship an Devotion* (Harper, $4.95).

The men of the cloth who are t occupy themselves meaningfully wil profit from D. T. Niles' *The Preach er's Calling to Be Servant* (Harpe

2.50), a not always fresh or facile but lways to-the-point study of what hrist's servanthood means for his inisters. This is part of a trilogy hich I frequently consult because of he comprehensive way they bring to- ether biblical materials on preaching.

I refused to be diverted from George . Tittmann's *What Manner of Love* Morehouse-Barlow, $3.75) because of he extravagant dust-jacket comments y Canon Howard Johnson ("trembles n the brink of greatness . . . it chieves . . . actual magnificence"). t is a worthwhile retelling of the lot of the Bible as the "love story f God" and on those terms one need ave few complaints. As a matter of act, an excellent sermon series could e born of its chapters to reintroduce eaders to the magnificent scope of he Bible. Also in this category: the amiliar chronicle by Simone Weil, *Waiting for God,* is now available n a Putnam Capricorn paperback, $1.25.

Moving to the more serious studies, pre-eminent is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man* (Harper, $5.00). Without professing competence to review it in detail and without being ready to recreate its whole argument, I would be ready to say that few books from the Christian world during the 1950's moved or disturbed me as much as did this one which appeared near their end. I expect to run away from some parts of it and to pirate others for a long time to come. The Jesuit paleontologist, always a controversial figure, speaks to the world that outlives him on the grandeur and scope of the Christian possibility in the world enlarged by evolution as he sees it. Sometimes the air he breathes is exhilarating, sometimes the abyss he contemplates is terrifying. But, whether accepted or rejected, the argument will change every reader. It cannot be forgotten. This is a "must" for all who have the courage! Incidentally, the photo of Teilhard by Philippe Halsman is a classic.

Second of the most scholarly works in this sequence is Oscar Cullman's *The Christology of the New Testament* (Westminster, $6.50). His survey tries to make its way between Bultmann's existential approach and, say, Ethelbert Stauffer's more matter-of-fact one. Often enough Cullman digresses into paths which were important to him in earlier research, but he usually recovers in time to shed really new light on the meaning of Christ by studying the New Testament's Christological titles.

And then, two more which moved me: Philip S. Watson's *The Concept of Grace* (Muhlenberg, $2.00), a series of lectures on the central Christian theme by a British Methodist we are now happy to welcome to our shores. Finally, Charles C. West has written *Outside the Camp* (Doubleday, $3.00), which sometimes retreads and other times newly treads on the ground where Christian problems seem to grow ever larger: in a revolutionary world and a wearying west. West's "out" is the way of Christian vocation in a world come of age, patterned more or less after the approach of Bonhoeffer. That, of course, I like.— *M. E. M.*

Pulpit Calendar

May 1 — 2nd Sunday after Easter.
May 1-8 — National Family Week.
May 8 — Festival of the Christian Home (Mother's Day).
May 15 — 4th Sunday after Easter.
May 22 — Rural Life Sunday.
May 26 — Ascension Day.
May 29 — Sunday after Ascension Day.
May 30 — Memorial Day.

June 5 — Whitsunday (Pentecost).
June 12 — Trinity Sunday. Children's Sunday.
June 19 — 2nd Sunday after Pentecost.
June 26 — Nature Sunday.

July 3 — Independence Sunday.
July 4 — Independence Day.
July 10 — 5th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 17 — 6th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 24 — 7th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 31 — 8th Sunday after Pentecost.

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